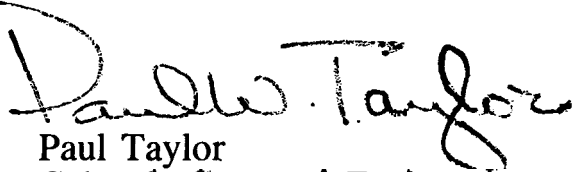


FOREWORD

This is the fourth publication in the series of Corps of Engineers Historical Studies. The first three contained the official reports of Army Engineers. This one is a little different. It reproduces the personal letters and diary of an Engineer soldier who served in the Civil War.

Union forces in the Civil War needed far more Engineers than the Regular Army could furnish. Volunteer Engineers, who entered the Army for wartime service only, supported operations just as did the regulars. Their contributions ranged from constructing ponton bridges under fire to building field fortifications for siege operations.

Thomas Owen's letters and diary reveal the life and duties of a volunteer Engineer who served as a sergeant and company-grade officer. These writings convey his reactions to the extreme conditions of war-time, from the rigors of combat to the boredom of camp life. For their insights into the thoughts and feelings of an Engineer at war and descriptions of Civil War combat engineering, they should still interest those of us who serve as Army Engineers.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Paul Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "P" and a long, horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Paul Taylor
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
Chief of Staff